



Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2328/27231>

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/1894  
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.  
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

**Title:**

Speech at the opening of the new Trades Hall, South Terrace, Adelaide

Please acknowledge the source as:  
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.  
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/1894

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan

1894 3

SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW  
TRADES HALL, SOUTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE. 23.2.72

SENATOR BISHOP, MR. SHANNON, BROTHERS AND FRIENDS:

I AM PROUD AND HONOURED TO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO PERFORM TODAY'S CEREMONY. THIS BUILDING PROVIDES THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LABOR MOVEMENT WITH A NEW, PERMANENT, EFFICIENT HOME. BUT IT'S MORE THAN THAT IT'S AN ENDURING SYMBOL OF THE CONTINUING SOLIDARITY OF THE MOVEMENT HERE AND ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND OF A TRADITION OF RADICAL REFORM THAT DATES BACK TO THE 1890's.

THE LATE, GREAT BEN CHIFLEY ONCE SAID: "THE LABOR MOVEMENT LIVES, THRIVES AND GROWS STRONGER BY THE WORK OF ALL IN IT AND NOT JUST BECAUSE OF THE WORK OF ONE INDIVIDUAL .... THERE IS A LONG WAY TO GO AND A LOT TO DO FOR THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIA. I AM CONFIDENT THAT IT CAN BE DONE AND I AM CERTAIN THAT THE LABOR PARTY IS THE ONLY PARTY THAT CAN DO IT".

THAT WAS TRUE IN 1949 AND IT'S TRUE TODAY.

PAGE 2.

WE ARE A UNITED REFORM MOVEMENT. THE INDUSTRIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY WINGS OF OUR MOVEMENT SHARE THE SAME GOALS AND THE SAME DETERMINATION TO EFFECT THE CHANGES WHICH WE AND THE ORDINARY CITIZENS OF THIS COUNTRY KNOW TO BE ESSENTIAL.

THERE IS A JOB TO BE DONE AND WE HAVE THE TOOLS TO DO IT.

BUT, IF I MAY PURSUE THE METAPHOR, THERE'S GOING TO BE A VERY TOUGH FIGHT TO KEEP US OUT OF THE WORKSHOP.

GOUGH WHITLAM WILL BE THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA - HEAVEN KNOWS THE JOB IS VACANT NOW. BUT THERE IS GOING TO BE A CONCERTED EFFORT BY THE PRESENT COALITION AND THEIR BACKERS TO STOP US AND ONE OF THEIR TACTICS WILL BE THE OLD TECHNIQUE OF 'DIVIDE AND RULE'. I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT THAT, I'M SURE THAT EACH OF US WILL BE ABLE TO SEE THROUGH CLUMSY ATTEMPTS OF THAT KIND AND WILL DEAL WITH THEM ACCORDINGLY.

I'M SURE TOO THAT THE VOTERS WON'T BE DECEIVED.

BUT I AM CONCERNED, AND SERIOUSLY CONCERNED, ABOUT OUTRIGHT MISREPRESENTATION.

THE LAST TIME I HAD THE PLEASURE TO SPEAKING HERE I REFERRED TO THE MYTH PUT ABOUT IN AUSTRALIA BY SOME POLITICAL INTERESTS AND SOME TROGLODYTE EMPLOYERS THAT A LABOR MOVEMENT MEANS INDUSTRIAL UNREST. NEXT WEEK STATE PARLIAMENT RESUMES AND I PREDICT NOW THAT WE SHALL HEAR THIS TALK REVIVED THEN.

THE AIM IS CLEAR: TO DISCREDIT US AS A STATE GOVERNMENT AND, BY ASSOCIATION, THE FEDERAL LABOR MOVEMENT.

IT GIVES ME NO PLEASURE TO SAY IT, BUT IT'S TRUE: SOME LIBERALS ARE PREPARED TO BAD-MOUTH SOUTH AUSTRALIA FOR THE MOST CYNICAL POLITICAL MOTIVES.

THEY ARE PREPARED TO SELL THIS STATE SHORT TO POTENTIAL INDUSTRIAL INVESTORS - AND SO ROB PEOPLE OF JOBS - IN THE HOPE THAT, IN DOING SO, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO CRAWL BACK INTO OFFICE.

THIS WOULD BE DEPLORABLE AT ANY TIME. IT IS APPALLING TO THINK THAT IT IS BEING DONE AT A TIME WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT - COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT INDUCED UNEMPLOYMENT - IS A MATTER OF NATIONAL CONCERN.

PAGE 4.

RUMOUR MONGERING OF THIS KIND CAN DO GRAVE DAMAGE TO OUR STATE AND IT FRANKLY MAKES ME VERY ANGRY.

LET'S CONSIDER THE FACTS. WE ARE THE THIRD LARGEST INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IN THIS COUNTRY. WE HAVE 9.1 PER CENT OF THE NATIONAL WORKFORCE. AND YET IN THE FIRST ELEVEN MONTHS OF 1971 - THE LATEST PERIOD FOR WHICH WE HAVE FIGURES - WE HAD ONLY 3.8 PER CENT OF THE NATIONAL TOTAL OF DAYS LOST THROUGH INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES. THIS IS VERY MUCH BELOW THE AVERAGE INCIDENCE PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES IN ALL THE OTHER MAJOR INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES, LOWER THAN NEW SOUTH WALES, THAN VICTORIA, THAN QUEENSLAND.

THESE ARE FACTS, NOT RUMOURS. MY GOVERNMENT IS PROUD OF OUR INDUSTRIAL RECORD. NO GOVERNMENT DOES MORE TO ENSURE THAT WE MAINTAIN A RECORD OF INDUSTRIAL PEACE AND THAT, AT THE SAME TIME, THE WORKER GETS A FAIR DEAL.

ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS FOR THIS IS OUR WILLINGNESS TO MEET AND TALK WITH UNIONISTS AND EMPLOYERS AT ANY TIME THEY WANT US TO DO SO. I THINK THIS POLICY IS WELL APPRECIATED BY THE T.L.C. AND BY THE EMPLOYER GROUPS. DAVE McKEE, AS LABOR AND INDUSTRY MINISTER, HAS SPENT LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF HOURS TALKING TO BOTH SIDES IN DISPUTES TO AVOID UNNECESSARY STRIKES. THE REASON IS SIMPLE. WE WANT STABLE LABOR RELATIONS BECAUSE THIS PROVIDES STABLE PAY PACKETS AND BECAUSE IT INDUCES NEW INVESTMENT AND MORE JOBS. BECAUSE WE HAVE THIS SOUND BASE WE, AS A LABOR GOVERNMENT, HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE A MAJOR REFORM OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION LAWS AND WE'LL SOON BE ABLE TO PUT BEFORE PARLIAMENT A MAJOR OVERHAUL OF THE INDUSTRIAL CODE.

ANYONE WHO IS PREPARED TO JEOPARDISE THIS AND TO SHORTCHANGE SOUTH AUSTRALIA BY PUTTING IT ABOUT THAT WE HAVE A HIGH INCIDENCE OF INDUSTRIAL UNREST IS BEING UTTERLY IRRESPONSIBLE.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF OUR INDUSTRIALISTS RECOGNISE THIS AND APPRECIATE THE VALUE OF UNIONS WHICH PROVIDE THEM WITH A RECOGNISABLE NEGOTIATING AUTHORITY FOR THEIR WORKFORCE AND A CHANNEL FOR DIALOGUE WITH THEM. THE CONTRIBUTIONS MANY OF THEM HAVE MADE TO THIS BUILDING AND ITS FURNISHINGS IS EVIDENCE OF THIS.

SIR, I BEGAN WITH A QUOTATION OF BEN CHIFLEY'S. LET ME END WITH ANOTHER: "THE SUCCESS OF THE LABOR PARTY AT THE NEXT ELECTION DEPENDS ENTIRELY, AS IT ALWAYS HAS DONE, ON THE PEOPLE. I TRY TO THINK OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT, NOT AS PUTTING AN EXTRA SIXPENCE INTO SOMEBODY'S POCKET OR MAKING SOMEBODY PRIME MINISTER OR PREMIER BUT AS A MOVEMENT BRINGING SOMETHING BETTER TO THE PEOPLE, BETTER STANDARDS OF LIVING, GREATER HAPPINESS TO THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE. WE HAVE A GREAT OBJECTIVE - THE LIGHT ON THE HILL." WE RETAIN THOSE IDEALS.

SIR, I COMMEND VERY SINCERELY THE EFFORTS OF ALL OF THOSE WHOSE HARD WORK AND VISION HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THIS BUILDING TO BE COMPLETED AND IT NOW GIVES ME VERY MUCH PLEASURE TO DECLARE THE NEW TRADES HALL OPEN.